MIDWEST COMPUTER GENEALOGISTS

NEWSLETTER

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ONE YEAR WITH THE REVIVED MCG WEBSITE

Julia Morse
Website Administrator and Digital Librarian

It has been a year since we relaunched the MCG website, https://mcgenealogists.org/. Since then, the website has grown as we have collected articles and suggested resources.

Some reasons you might wish to browse the MCG website:

- Check out our "Favorite Free Family Research Tools" page: https://mcgenealogists.org/2020/03/01/favorite-free-research-tools/

- View current and past MCG Newsletter articles with illustrations and easier-to-follow weblinks.

- Leave a comment about an MCG article that you particularly enjoyed, or to augment the record from your own experience.

- Enjoy occasional video highlights or related points of interest that are not included in the monthly newsletters.

- Explore our archive of past newsletters. (Older newsletters continue to be archived. Check back for more, or sign up for email notifications.)

- Get inspired to write your stories. We have collected examples of various ways people have preserved their family stories in simple books or documents: https://mcgenealogists.org/2020/02/29/get-inspired-with-these-histories/

- Sign up for email notification of new MCG website content: https://mcgenealogists.org/2020/03/01/sign-up-for-email-updates/ (This is usually between three to five notifications per month—not a daily nuisance. You can unsubscribe at any time.)

- Leave a suggestion! You can email us at MCGenealogists@gmail.com.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

The month of April holds many events for our family. My wife, Dorothy Jean (Newcomb) Morse, was born on April 21, 1942 in a farm house in rural Bates County, Missouri. She had told me, over the years, that her birthday had never been on Easter Sunday. In the fall of 2018, as calendars started coming in the mail, I noticed and told her that her birthday would be on Easter Sunday in 2019. However, she died on January 3, 2019. Her father, Herbert Edgar Newcomb, was born April 16, 1911, also in a farm house in Bates County. Dorothy had told me that he had celebrated a birthday on Easter Sunday.

Our youngest grandson, Owen, was born on April 22, 2004. On April 21, our son, Steve and his very pregnant wife, Kelly, took us to dinner on the Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri. She gave birth the next day. Dorothy said many times, "I wish he was born on my birthday". Whether she said that in jest or not, I am not sure.

When Dorothy was choir director at Eastgate Christian Church in Independence, Missouri, she had to prepare the choir for all Sundays leading to Easter and have a very special anthem for Easter Sunday morning. Over several years, Dorothy and

the minister's wife alternated between directing the choir or playing the piano for the choir. We usually had a paid organ player, but when she could not be there, Dorothy filled in at the organ.

In 2006, Dorothy had been in the hospital with a bacterial infection. She told the infectious disease doctor that she was tired of coming down with these different bacterial infections. She told him, "Give me the bomb!". He put her on two different medicines through IV's. After one week in the hospital, she went to Timberlake Nursing Home in Kansas City, Missouri for five weeks. One of the IV's was removed after ten days or two weeks. The other IV was given every four hours, and it took one hour to give. So, I would go there and we could go for a car ride or even shop for three hours. But we had to get her back for the next IV. On April 22, after she finished an IV, we drove to Steve's house for Owen's second birthday party. Everyone was surprised when we showed up. After about one hour, I took her back to Timberlake for her next IV. She finished the five weeks a few days later and she came back to our home in Independence. She never did have another bacterial infectious disease.

April generally means the beginning of the gardening season. Although I usually tried to get lettuce seed, onion plants, and radish seed planted in March as we enjoyed salads from the garden. This year has been a tough year to get much accomplished. I do have some lettuce and onions up in the garden here at Foxwood Springs in Raymore, Missouri. The garden area had to be extended as more people were interested in gardening. We have 26 garden plots, each about 1000 square feet in size. I also manage about 50 to 60 thornless blackberry bushes. They are leafing out and looking good. Two gooseberry bushes are blooming. About a dozen red raspberry bushes are beginning to leaf out. They are primarily a fall bearing berry. Two elderberry bushes are also leafing out. I have already been pulling weeds out of the berry patch and have mowed a couple of times between the rows of berry bushes. I love gardening. It gets me outside and gives me something to do. With the pandemic we have had this past year, the garden has been my escape and my joy for all of last summer and for this year. After being inside all winter and getting out of shape, I now am getting back in shape.

In 2016, just as gardening was off to a great start, my afib was giving me problems. On April 27, I had an ablation. It was successful, but a vein was nicked. I had to have 2 or 3 blood transfusions. I then had to stay in the hospital for five nights instead of one. I got home, but two days later, on May 4, I went to the ER and then to surgery to remove a two foot section of intestine because it had twisted. I was in the hospital with that until May 11. So, I did very little gardening for the next several weeks. I slowly got back into the garden by being careful. Many of the other gardeners helped keep my garden plot weed free and they mowed the berry patch. We did have a successful garden. Dorothy and I did a lot of canning that summer. In fact, we even went to our 80 acres in Bates County, Missouri and picked some wild blackberries in July.

I imagine that everyone could write about events that have happened to their family on each of the 12 months of the year. Give it a try.

MAY WEBINAR RECOMMENDATION:
SELECT FROM OVER 1500
ROOTSTECH 2021 WEBINARS

This month's recommendation is not just one webinar, but a whole catalog!

Rootstech is the most-talked-about annual international conference destination for family researchers. Sponsored by FamilySearch International (FamilySearch.org), it usually takes place in Salt Lake City, but due to the pandemic, the 2021 conference occurred online in February.

This year's webinar sessions (over 1500) are still freely available at your own convenience!

You can get started at the main page: https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/

You can select webinars from various "themes" at their "Guide Me" page, https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/series:

- Getting Started
- FamilySearch
- Ancestry
- MyHeritage
- DNA
- Homeland Heritage
- Advanced Skills
- African Heritage
- Jewish Heritage
- Native American Heritage

Alternatively, you can type in a search keyword on the "Explore" page, https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/search or select from additional categories:

- Keynote presentations
- Connecting with family (and family stories)
- Finding Ancestors
- Places, Records, and Research
- Memories – Stories, Photos and Videos
- Traditions and Heritage
- Websites, Tools and Apps

(Submitted by Julia Morse)

HARD TIMES AT DEEPWATER AND MARSHALL'S CREEK, 1840s

Part 3 in our Series from *the Autobiography of John Milton Morris*,*

Editorial Notes:
In Parts 1 and 2 (in the January and March newsletters), John Milton Morris recalls people and events from his childhood with families associated with the Harmony Mission of Bates and Vernon Counties, Missouri, after it closed 1836. He continues here describing how families endured hardships of settler life in the Deepwater, Missouri, area. The exact timing of the events described in this section is unclear, but take place in the mid 1840s. We note that the author, writing between 1885 and 1906, used the term "negro" in a way that was acceptable in those days. We leave it as the author's original words as a part of this historical narrative.

Finally, my father, in his preaching tours, got acquainted with Tayes and Mr. Summers, two Virginians who had settled at Marshall's Creek, some miles from Clinton, the county seat, and having got so poor from sickness and cutting the main artery in his leg when skinning a deer at Double Branch that he could get little to eat or wear, he concluded to send for me at Dr. Dodge's, and move to Marshall's Creek.

But before entering into this change, one or two incidents of the many that happened while at Deepwater and Double Branch may be told to show how people suffered for the necessaries of life. One summer, the whooping cough came to Deepwater, and all our family had it. Even myself. I was not more than eight or nine, and had all the work to do. And the disease was so malignant that children died with it. Almost everyone had it in some form. The parents were down flat with what the docters called "nurse cough." Children would sit for hours as still as death, for the moment they moved, they would cough. We never before nor since have seen such a seige with whooping cough, and it lasted from spring until the next winter. With this came a general ear ache. The ears would fester, rise, and break. The suffering was intense. Deafness set in, and my poor mother could not hear what the children said.

The stomach had no desire to receive food. Off in another settlement we heard of some honey, and such a thing as sweet was not to be had with us. Being the only one able to do anything, Father got up Old Mike, the old sore-back horse, put blankets on, gave me a bucket, and sent me for honey to Finas Means'es. The horse very gentle, but would scare, and jump sidewise. Mr. Mean gave me the small pail of honey on the horse (it was strained). On my return home, the horse scared, jumped as quick as thought to one side. Holding onto Old Mike, in vain drew the bucket up onto the neck of Old Mike, and turned the honey over on the top of my head, running all down over my face and stomach. On reaching home, my mother cried, and a funeral procession could have been no more solemn than this occassion.

Another time, my mother making 42 coats in one year besides pants and vests. She nor Father either

one of them never saw but one dollar cash during that year, and that dollar Mother got in part pay for making a coat. This was the only dollar seen by either one of them, let alone to have, and Mother gave fifty cents of that to the presiding elder of that district. And we think she got this dollar of Mr. English, ex-sheriff of the county, for making a fine broadcloth coat to go see General or President Jackson in. It being reported that General Jackson had given English a fine coat, which, after the coat was made, my father being acquainted with the traits of Jackson, believed the whole matter a hoax. And on ferretting out the affair, it proved to be the case. He never went to Tenessee to see General Jackson.

During this year of starvation, the only resource we had was pecans brought one doller a bushel in St. Louis. Dr. Rekwa [Requa] offered us his wagon and horses free of charge to go onto the Marais Des Cygnes bottom and gather pecans by taking his son and daughter and hired man along, C. T. Towner. We all camped together. Slept in one bed on the ground, the women on one end and the men on the other end of the bed, that must have been forty or fifty feet long. The men fell the trees, and nearly all the pecan trees on the Marais Des Cygnes bottom were cut down this year. The women and children picked up the nuts, for when the trees fell, all the nuts shattered out on the ground, and on clearing away the limbs, the nuts could be scraped up by the handful on the bare ground. We got sixty bushels to our share, and made a store account of $60 all told. We well remember how Father and Mother divided and subdivided their $60 to make it go the farthest. Father needed a $7 blanket so bad to make an overcoat, and this $7 seemed to always be short. Finally Father said, "I will have to do without the overcoat. pass on." But Mother would not hear to it. We had only one dollar's worth of sugar that year.

. . . At Marshall's Creek we fared better. My oldest brother, Thomas, worked for Mr. Tays (spelling verified) by the year, as he had done at Dr. Rekwa's. My mother taught school what little she could, and my being able to help Father farm, we soon began to pick up a little. The neighbors were very good to us. They were well off. All owned slaves. But the women folks did not know how to cook. They were daughters of Col. Everetts, of Virginnia, who gave each one of these married daughters a tract of land and some negroes. But to the daughters, he gave young, inexperienced help, while to the sons-in-law he gave experienced negro men to help improve the raw land he had bought for them. Mrs. Summers knew how to weave, and my mother used to spin cotton and wool on her big and little hand wheels, and Mrs. Summers wove it to make all the clothes we wore; and in turn, my mother learned the woman how to cook, make cheeze, and many garments of both male and female attire.

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*Source: John Milton Morris' manuscript is housed in the microfilm collection of the University of California Berkeley Library as *John M. Morris Diary and Autobiography,* 1885-1906. It was transcribed and published online by his grandson Chaumont Devin, circa 2005, as The Autobiography of John Milton Morris.

THINGS GRANDMOTHER LOVED

Vivian Elliott White

Editor's Note: This selection is from a book of poems the author compiled to share memories of her grandmother, an Illinois pioneer. For the month of Mother's Day, we share it as inspiration for you to recall and record memories of your own mother and grandmothers.

She loved to walk through a quiet woods
Where all nature lay at rest.
Where trees stood like awkward giants,
Each holding an empty nest.

She loved to hear the dry rustle
Of the wind as it sang through the weeds.
To feel spring's breath whispering,
"I shall awaken the seeds."

She loved to see white crocus
Swept clean by the soft warm rain;
To lie on earth's green carpet,
Forgetting life's trouble and strain.

She loved to smell lilacs and roses

Mingled on a warm summer night.
She knew God ruled this mighty world
And she was a child in His sight.

--Vivian Ellen White. *Memories of Grandmother*, p. 14. Self-published on or before 1958. Digitized by the Illinois University Library, https://archive.org/details/memoriesofgrandm00whi t/page/14/mode/2up.

(Submitted by Julia Morse.)

CELEBRATING MOTHER

Marjorie Slavens

Following is the tribute I wrote for my mother, Mildred Marie Welty Slavens, when she celebrated her 95th birthday.

"Today, December 2, 2005, is the 95th birthday of my mother, Mildred Slavens. I told her yesterday, as I have other times, she is one of the strongest and bravest people I have ever known. She is naturally quiet and shy, but her strength and determination are very evident every day, and, although she has many physical challenges, she is as mentally alert and active today as she ever was. As my brother, Everett told her recently, she is definitely Charlie Kerr's granddaughter.

Mother's grandfather, Charlie Kerr, lived to be 98 ½ years old. His father died when he was 7, and he was raised by another family, but he studied and worked to succeed in spite of many challenges. His first wife, Ella, died at 27, leaving him with 2 small children to raise. He and his second wife, Millie, celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary before she died. He owned a country general store, which he operated until age 80, when government ration stamps during World War II offended his strong Republican opposition to government interference in his life. He also owned some farm land, of which he was very proud. He was President of a bank that failed like many others at the beginning of the depression, and he and his friends struggled to survive and to help their neighbors survive this financial crisis. He was a survivor, and yes, Mother is definitely his granddaughter.

Although Mother had two years of teacher training and would have liked to work to help support our family during World War II, my father was a proud man and would not permit his wife to work; family financial support was his responsibility. My parents were married on October 12, 1930 at the beginning of the depression. For the first ten years of their marriage, they, like many other people, struggled to earn enough money to support their children. They had three blind children, and they had no experience dealing with such a challenge. Their children went to public schools at a time when children with severe visual problems were sent to a School for the Blind. When a social worker in Pittsburg, Kansas told Mother she was being selfish keeping my older brother and sister in public schools, she did not want to send them away. Fortunately, when she asked their teacher for advice, she said, "Why would you want to do that? They are two of the best students I have."

My parents learned to cope with our blindness by trial and error. Fortunately, they gave us the freedom and independence to develop our own abilities. As Mother has said, it was hard to see her blind children leave home because she did not know how they would survive in the outside world away from home. All four of her children are very strong and independent, and they have survived very well.

I believe one can tell the quality of parents by the quality of their children. Parents provide the moral and ethical foundation for their children in their formative years, but it is the children, as adults, who are responsible for developing this basic foundation to create their own productive and satisfying lives. In turn, they use their own talents and abilities to influence the next generation.

My brother, Everett, has three children and taught History in colleges for 38 years before retirement. As President Ben Elrod of Ouachita Baptist University said at Everett's retirement, he had had a strong and productive influence on several generations of college students, as well as serving as a mentor for many of his younger faculty colleagues. In retirement, he is an active volunteer at his church, working with their AIDS care program, acting as a leader in Stephen Ministers, and traveling three times to Zambia to work in their missionary program.

My older sister, Beverly, took a Business course and worked for almost ten years before she was married. She has two children and a grandson, and she has been a strong and very supportive mother and grandmother, just as her own mother before her. She is an active volunteer in her church and in such organizations as the Missouri Council of the Blind, to help improve the quality of the lives of others beyond her own family. When my father was seriously ill and throughout the months of the cancer which took his life, she was Mother's primary source of support because the rest of us lived so far away and could not be in St. Louis to help.

My younger sister, Carol, is the only child of my parents who is not blind. She is a source of great strength for our family, especially for Mother. When Mother had her first cancer surgery, which lasted five hours, Carol was there, as she always is for any of mother's many medical challenges. The nursing profession would have benefited greatly if Carol had decided to continue studying Nursing; she has all of the right instincts and is an excellent care giver. She is a dedicated government worker and is as conscientious about her work responsibilities as she is about her family support. She has two children and two grandchildren who benefit greatly from her strength and support. In addition to helping Mother with medical care, Carol and her husband have the primary responsibility for helping our uncle and my brother-in-law's aunt, who are slightly younger than Mother.

Mother is very proud of her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, but no more than they are of her. In spite of many physical challenges, she continues to read and work around the house as much as she can. She started using her computer at age 86 with very little help from anyone. Carol helped her occasionally, and I advised her at times by phone, but most of what she learned was by trial and error and her own determination. She enjoys her genealogical research, and she has published 6 books on her family lines. She has updated some of these books and published new editions as she discovers new information. She has several other books in preparation, and her mind is always active as she seeks new material. Mother has used her 95 years very well, in spite of the challenges, and, although she is occasionally discouraged, she will never give up and will continue to achieve and be productive as long as she lives. For our family, today is truly a day of celebration."

Mother died June 30,2008, and I wrote the following at that time.

"Today, July 3, 2008, we have come together to celebrate the life of my mother, Mildred Slavens. She was 97 years and 7 months old when she died Monday at St. Luke's Hospital. Mother was a strong and determined survivor, even to the last minutes of her life. We are so grateful now that she is resting and is at peace.

Mother often traveled with me. Both of my parents loved to go to Mexico with me, although neither spoke Spanish. They enjoyed all of my friends there, and they were always ready to go. She also traveled to Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina with me.

Mother typed both my Master's thesis and my 326 page Doctoral dissertation, having to type letter by letter because she did not know Spanish. She read for me and recorded over 5000 pages of Mexican novels when no other reader was available. She learned to read Mexican newspapers in order to find articles on Mexican theater for me.

She loved her family history research and spent countless hours traveling to and researching in libraries, court houses, cemeteries, etc. so long as she was able to do so. When she was not able to travel, she turned to her computer and the Internet to actively continue her research.

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